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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re patent application of: )  
Richard A. Hynes ) Before the Examiner  
Serial No.: 10/099,797 ) Michael B. Priddy  
Filed: March 15, 2002 )  
SPINAL FIXATION SYSTEM AND ) Group Art Unit: 3732  
RELATED METHODS ) October 3, 2005

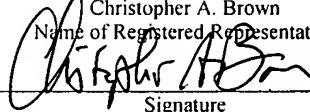
**AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO FINAL OFFICE ACTION**

Mail Stop  
Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

In response to the Office Action dated August 3, 2005, please consider the following.

Forty claims had previously been pending with this application, of which seven were independent. With this amendment, 20 claims are pending, of which four are independent. No extensions of time are believed necessary, and no fees are believed to be due for consideration of this paper. If any extensions of time or fees are deemed necessary, please grant such extensions or charge such fees to Deposit Account No. 23-3030, but not to include issue fees.

<p>I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Mail Stop: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on <u>October 3, 2005</u>.</p>	
<p>Christopher A. Brown Name of Registered Representative  Signature</p>	
<p><u>October 3, 2005</u> Date of Signature</p>	